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**STATIONERS'**

C O M P A N Y

# Innovation Excellence Awards 2025



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# Innovation Excellence Awards 2025

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**Innovation has always been key to the Stationers' Company. From the copyrighting of the works of William Shakespeare to the establishment of type and printing that led to the birth of Fleet Street, our livery company has led the way.**

**Doug Wills**  
Master, The Stationers' Company

# Welcome

## A warm welcome to Stationers' Hall for the Innovation Excellence Awards 2025.

In a world that is almost unrecognisable from when the Stationers' Company began to take shape more than 600 years ago, there is so much rich history and potential in that simple sentence.

Innovation has always been key to the Stationers' Company. From the copyrighting of the works of William Shakespeare, to the establishment of type and printing that led to the birth of Fleet Street, our livery company has led the way.

Today the content and communications industry is facing seismic change. Everyone is grappling with the challenges and consequences of AI and the ever-faster-growing impact of social media.

Today innovation is king.

And today we celebrate the kingmakers! You will see from the businesses that are being honoured today that those in our industries are rising to the challenges.

There are some brilliant concepts which have been skilfully introduced, promoted and packaged. As a



newsman used to working to deadlines, sometimes at the cost of perfection, I am hugely impressed. I know you will be too.

I congratulate all those who have won or are shortlisted for today's awards. And I thank all the sponsors, backers, the organisers and the judges of today's Awards, without whom this wonderful event could not have taken place.

You are all winners in today's changing world.

**Doug Wills**  
Master,  
The Stationers' Company





**Innovation drives our industries forward and is the lifeblood of progress. That's why Picon remains so enthusiastic about supporting these Innovation Excellence Awards. They really are valued and respected across the communications sector.**

**Bettine Pellant**

CEO, Picon

Innovation Excellence Awards 2025 co-sponsors



**Innovation doesn't happen in isolation. Learning from each other is invaluable, and that's why we're so proud to sponsor these awards. Together, the innovations we shape are challenging what's possible and changing lives for decades to come.**

**Hayley White**

VP Assessment, Standards and Services, Pearson

Innovation Excellence Awards 2025 co-sponsors

# Judging panel

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## Vida Barr-Jones (Co-Chair)

Vida is a strategic leader with over 45 years of commercial experience, helping organisations navigate change and unlock growth. She has worked across start ups, scale ups and enterprise, including 30 years with Spicers, Europe's largest office products wholesaler. Passionate about innovation, Vida co-founded the brand and growth agency Focus7 International before establishing her own consultancy, Vida Barr-Jones Ltd. Today she works with business owners, boards and investors as a fractional CMO, COO and senior advisor, aligning brand, marketing and operations to turn strategy into measurable impact.

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## Kate Howell (Co-Chair)

Kate is a communications advisor and non-executive director specialising in food, communities and markets. For 12 years, she was Director of Communications and Engagement at Borough Market, responsible for building the market's brand, developing its communications, increasing engagement, and ensuring that the institution's voice was heard through the media. A passionate advocate for equality in the industry, she is Vice President of Les Dames D'Escoffier International, a philanthropic organisation which supports women in hospitality internationally.

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## Sally Beken

Sally has worked in tech transfer for over 15 years, using her expert knowledge of polymers to help build numerous collaborations and support companies accessing funding for innovative projects. She has been an innovation lead at Innovate UK and monitored a portfolio of over 60 projects and steered the scope for plastics-related competitions. She is determined to see less plastic waste entering the environment while realising the positive benefits of polymers in mitigating climate change and supporting sustainability. She founded and currently heads up the UK Circular Plastics Network and leads on the smart sustainable plastic packaging activity at KTN.

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## Professor Linda Drew

Linda brings to the panel expertise from the design, content, media and technology disciplines in the education sector. She has held several senior leadership roles in specialist creative higher education, including Vice Chancellor of Ravensbourne University London and Deputy Director at the Glasgow School of Art. Currently chair of governors at the Stationers' Academies, she focuses a lot of her energy on supporting young people and enterprise in the creative content and communications industries. She is also an experienced chair, board member and trustee in creative industries and education, including with start ups and community interest companies.

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## Helen Esmonde

Helen was the founder of Esmonde Publishing Limited, a publisher of stationery and books for major UK retailers, museums, charities and thinktanks. After her business was acquired by the GMC Publishing Group in 2012, Helen stayed on as Publishing Director, retiring in 2020. She is a Past Master of the Stationers' Company – the first woman to lead the company in its more-than-600-year history. She sits on the Court of the Stationers' Company, the Council of City and Guilds and the Development Board of Book

Aid International and is a trustee of the publishing company Hymns Ancient and Modern. She is also Cluster Director of the Leigh Academies Trust, providing board oversight of academies in southeast London and northwest Kent.

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### **Amy Hutchinson**

Amy is the CEO of the BOSS Federation, the trade association for the business supplies industry, a position she had held since 2019. With over 15 years' experience in membership bodies, she has focused her career on supporting businesses through representation, recognition, professional services support and training and development. Amy is committed to championing the next generation of industry leaders through the BOSS Leaders of the Future' programme, which helps emerging professionals expand their networks and build the skills needed for long-term success.

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### **Jill Jones**

Jill brings to the panel publishing leadership expertise from the print, digital and educational technology sectors. Formerly MD/CEO for global academic publishers McGraw-Hill Education EMEA and Cengage EMEA, she was also a non-executive director and board member of Bloomsbury Publishing PLC and of TLN in the Netherlands. She now divides her time between a number of non-executive roles, including tech start-ups and SMEs. She is a Stationers' Company Court Assistant, chair of the Industry Committee and a former co-chair of the Innovation Excellence Awards.

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### **Debbie Waldron-Hoines**

Debbie began her career in the print and packaging industry more than 30 years ago. In 2001, after holding senior positions in reprographics and corrugated printing in the UK and France, she founded Avant-Tout (Management Services) Ltd, which focuses on technical capability, account management and

project delivery in multi-language environments. She is Consultant CEO of FIA UK Ltd, Director of FTA Europe, Vice Chair of the Graphic, Print & Media Alliance and an active member of the Packaging Federation. A Stationers' Company Liveryman, she represents interests in the north of England and sits on a number of industrial and education-related committees.

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### **Doug Wills**

Doug is Editor Emeritus of the Evening Standard and The Independent. He was previously Managing Editor of the Evening Standard for 15 years, 10 of those as Group Managing Editor. Doug trained in journalism with Thomson Regional Newspapers in Berkshire, then went on to be the political correspondent for the Western Daily Press in Bristol before rejoining Thomson newspapers in a number of roles. After moving to London to join the Mirror Group, he helped to launch the London Daily News as Assistant Editor (Production). Doug is board member and former President of the Society of Editors and Chair of the London Press Club.

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### **Andy Wilson**

After starting his career at Aardman Animation, Andy moved on to work on television services, broadcast innovation, product management and digital rights for the BBC, where his roles included Head of Delivery for BBC micro:bit, a highly ambitious education and technology initiative that allowed a million children to discover coding through a new computing device. Andy joined Dropbox, where he led the growth and technical delivery of the Digital Production Partnership. He is now Senior Director of New Product Solutions & Media at Dropbox, helping to develop new creative products for over 700 million registered users.

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# Guest of honour

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## Dr Vanessa Lawrence CB

Dr Vanessa Lawrence CB spent the first 11 years of her career at Longman Group, which today is known as Pearson. During that time, she was awarded a scholarship from The Stationers' and Newspaper Makers' Company for a project to further management and technological skills in the industry.

Vanessa now has over 35 years' experience in the digital data community and has specialised in geographical information and space applications. From 2000 to 2014, she was the Director General and CEO of Ordnance Survey, Great Britain's national mapping authority – the first woman to lead the organisation in over 200 years and the longest serving Director General since 1875.

From 2011-2015, Vanessa was the founding Co-Chair of the United Nations Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the first new 'official' committee formed within the UN since the early 1990s. Today, UN-GGIM is globally the lead policy organisation working in geographical information.

For the past decade, as the owner of Location International, she has been working with her team to advise governments, inter-governmental organisations and large private sector organisations on improving their own use of location information, including data generated from space.

Among other appointments, Vanessa sits on the boards of the Alan Turing Institute for Data Science and AI, UK Government Investments (the UK government's centre of excellence in corporate governance and corporate finance) and the UK Centre for Doctoral Training in Geospatial Systems. She was awarded the Royal Geographical Society's Founder's Gold Medal in 2024 and was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 2008.





# THE STATIONERS' COMPANY WARRANT

## A MARK OF QUALITY AND EXCELLENCE

Since its inception in 2014, the Stationers' Warrant has established itself as a highly esteemed mark of quality and excellence within our industries, reflecting our unique reach and expertise.

As our marketplaces have changed, so the Stationers' Warrants have been applied across an ever-wider range of recipients, from classic stationery products to cutting-edge digital services. All winning entries have the honour of using the Warrant logo to promote their product or service.

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# The Awards: Winners & shortlists

# Award for Business Process 2025

## Shortlist

**Aura Consultants**  
for e-halo

**Rebel Stationery Ltd**  
for Rebel Stationery Textile  
Collection

**Xerox UK Ltd**  
for Xerox Workplace Apps

## Highly commended

**Xerox UK Ltd**  
for Xerox Workplace Apps

Offering a growing collection of more than 100 downloadable apps, this digital platform is designed to extend the document-handling and data-processing capabilities of Xerox printers, turning them into smart workplace assistants. The apps – which aim to reduce costs, improve productivity and add value to previous investment in Xerox products – can be installed and used without extensive training.

Our judges said:

*"Amazing convergence of enabling processes in one easy application. Seems almost too good to be true!"*

**xerox™**

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## Winner

### **Aura Consultants** for e-halo

This digital platform is designed to help brands and retailers manage, optimise and futureproof their packaging portfolios in the pursuit of increased sustainability. Delivering real-time, item-level information across primary, secondary, and tertiary packaging, it offers instant recyclability calculations, automated compliance tracking, and carbon impact assessments, all underpinned by expert consultancy and strategic foresight.

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## Our judges said:

*“Really interesting development that brings together some of the most important elements of designing future products, including sustainability and ethics across the supply chain.”*



# Award for Communications, including Marketing 2025

## Shortlist

**City of London's  
Leadenhall Market &  
Barley Communications**  
for Revitalising a Heritage  
Brand

**GeoBrand Ltd**  
for Digital High Street

**Workplace360**  
for Workplace360  
Magazine

**Xerox UK Ltd**  
for Xerox Workplace Apps

## Highly commended

**GeoBrand Ltd**  
for Digital High Street

This place-based digital directory is designed to help local authorities, business improvement districts and estates digitally showcase their town centres, connecting people to businesses, events and experiences through a simple, community-branded platform. Designed to be managed locally, Digital High Street allows these places to promote what makes them unique, update content in real-time and engage audiences meaningfully.

Our judges said:

*"Loved the concept – could be of great benefit for local authorities and BIDS."*



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## Winner

### **City of London's Leadenhall Market & Barley Communications** for Revitalising a Heritage Brand

As part of an ongoing partnership between Barley Communications and Leadenhall Market, this initiative sought to tackle the challenge of low weekend footfall in the City. In 2024 Barley successfully sourced, managed and promoted 13 Weekend Markets that repositioned Leadenhall as a vibrant weekend destination. Supported by a concerted campaign of media engagement and social media content and partnerships, the project reinvented the space to serve modern audiences while honouring its historical roots.

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## Our judges said:

*"Tingle factor – amazing stats, impressive impact, hugely scalable to support local high streets and small, independent shops."*

**barley**

COMMUNICATION THAT MATTERS

# Award for Customer Experience 2025

## Shortlist

**Interflex Group Ltd**  
for Quality Street

**FabLittleBag**  
for FabLittleBag

## Highly commended

**FabLittleBag**  
for FabLittleBag

Every day in the UK, 2.5 million tampons and 1.4 million pads are flushed down the toilet, resulting in plastic pollution to rivers, oceans and beaches. FabLittleBag is a sustainably sourced disposable bag that allows period products to be easily binned instead. Designed to be opened with one hand, the bags are quick and simple to use, seal tight to prevent any odours, and are completely opaque for discreet disposal.

Our judges said:

*"FabLittleBag is breaking new ground in personal care by creating an entirely new category – or, at the very least, redefining and formalising one that has long been under-served."*



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## Winner

### **Interflex Group Ltd** for Quality Street

Created for Nestlé, Interflex Group's fully recyclable, paper-based twist wrap for Quality Street chocolates replaces the previous foil and cellulose overwraps. The new wrap is produced using water-based inks and a unique bio-based coating that provides essential grease and oil resistance and ensures product integrity while achieving an excellent CEPI recyclability score, making it kerbside recyclable for UK consumers.

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## Our judges said:

*"A genuinely ground-breaking advancement in the confectionery sector. Responds directly to retailer pressure, sustainability demands, and technical limitations that had previously gone unsolved."*



**INTERFLEX  
GROUP**

# Award for Education Technology 2025

## Shortlist

**Class Professional**  
for ParaFolio for NQPs

**Prismatext**  
for Blended Language  
Learning

**The Rosen Publishing  
Group**  
for LevelUp Reader

**Voxblock**  
for Voxblock

## Highly commended

**The Rosen Publishing  
Group**  
for LevelUp Reader

LevelUp Reader is an adaptive literacy platform for developing English language skills, encompassing reading, writing, listening, and speaking. An intake assessment sets a child's initial reading level and provides "just right" books for that level. The system then monitors their progress, continuously offers titles of appropriate difficulty, uses gaming incentives to encourage engagement, and provides both students and educators with rich data.

Our judges said:

*"A seamless offer that provides the learner with an intuitive interface dealing with more than one aspect of literacy development in one product, designed with accessibility in mind."*



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## Winner

### **Voxblock** for Voxblock

Voxblock is a screen-free audiobook system designed to support literacy and independent listening in children. At its heart is a durable, child-friendly audiobook player and a library of physical audiobook blocks. Each block contains a professionally narrated story that plays instantly, with no need for screens, wi-fi, downloads or subscriptions. The system aims to be accessible to children who find traditional reading difficult or overwhelming.



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## Our judges said:

*"Great to see an option for locally stored content to be played in an accessible way – for SEND learners, wider classroom groups or wider access services. Its form factor and tactile approach is a great piece of product design."*

# Award for Product Design 2025

## Shortlist

**Aura Consultants**  
for e-halo

**Fantom Factory**  
for Green Analytics

**Glassboxx**  
for Glassboxx

**Interflex Group Ltd**  
for Quality Street

**FabLittleBag**  
for FabLittleBag

**Wipak UK Ltd**  
for Charleville Grated

## Highly commended

**Aura Consultants**  
for e-halo

This digital platform is designed to help brands and retailers manage, optimise and futureproof their packaging portfolios in the pursuit of increased sustainability. Delivering real-time, item-level information across primary, secondary, and tertiary packaging, it offers instant recyclability calculations, automated compliance tracking, and carbon impact assessments, all underpinned by expert consultancy and strategic foresight.

Our judges said:

*"An innovative platform using clever tech and with an environmental agenda."*



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## Winner

### **FabLittleBag** for FabLittleBag

Every day in the UK, 2.5 million tampons and 1.4 million pads are flushed down the toilet, resulting in plastic pollution to rivers, oceans and beaches. FabLittleBag is a sustainably sourced disposable bag that allows period products to be easily binned instead. Designed to be opened with one hand, the bags are quick and simple to use, seal tight to prevent any odours, and are completely opaque for discreet disposal.

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## Our judges said:

*"Very simple and brilliant idea which was well executed and designed and meets a market need."*



# Award for Start Up 2025

## Shortlist

**Rebel Stationery Ltd**  
for Rebel Stationery Textile  
Collection

**xigxag Ltd**  
for xigxag Digital  
Audiobook Gift Cards

## Highly commended

**Rebel Stationery Ltd**  
for Rebel Stationery Textile  
Collection

Rebel Stationery's Textile Collection, consisting of diaries and notebooks bound with beautifully patterned linen bookcloth, aims to support women in the global textile industry. By licensing patterns from weavers around the world and paying them for every copy sold, the collection brings fairness to a trade process that has long been manipulated and abused for profit and gives artists the chance to share and celebrate their heritage.

Our judges said:

*"Enables developing material designs to be transposed to digital print, directly rewarding the individual creative artist."*

**Rebel.**  
Stationery **with a cause.**

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## Winner

### **xigxag Ltd** for xigxag Digital Audiobook Gift Cards

The xigxag audiobook platform offers a UK-based, B Corp-certified alternative to the tech giants that dominate this fast-growing market. Its innovative new gift cards give physical retailers, including independent bookshops, the chance to profit from audiobooks. Printed on recycled 300gsm paper with the title's cover artwork prominently displayed, the cards provide a QR code that works with xigxag's subscription-free app.



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## Our judges said:

*"This excellent entry showed a strong business model and compelling evidence of unmet needs."*

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# Innovator of the Year 2025

**FabLittleBag**  
for FabLittleBag





**Sometimes the seemingly obvious solutions are the hardest to pull off. FabLittleBag's eco-friendly period disposal bags address a major issue that is far too rarely discussed: the environmental impact on our waterways of plastic pollution resulting from the widespread flushing of period products. By breaking down enduring taboos around menstrual care, Loopeeze Ltd have created not just a highly effective product but a movement, amplified by their efforts to distribute the bags through businesses, universities, hospitality venues and sports arenas. Our judges were unanimous in their choice of the 2025 Innovator of the Year.**

**Vida Barr-Jones & Kate Howell**  
Co-Chairs, Innovation Excellence Awards 2025



**Barley Communications** is a social purpose communications agency. In 2023, after becoming a certified B Corp, Barley launched its Purpose Plus proposition. This innovative values-led approach to communications helps charities, commercial businesses and public sector organisations engage and communicate with audiences on issues that really matter.

## What happens next? An update from a 2024 winner

### Barley Communications Winner of the 2024 Award for Communications, including Marketing

At Barley Communications, innovation is about more than being creative. It's about driving purposeful impact, using communications to help organisations tackle some of society's most pressing issues. That's why we were so delighted to win the 2024 Innovation Excellence Award for Communications including Marketing

Our winning entry showcased Purpose Plus – a proposition that puts social and environmental responsibility at the centre of our work. Purpose Plus is both a manifesto and a framework built around three core commitments: to our people, to our work with clients and to the environment and wider world. It underpins every campaign we deliver, ensuring we walk our talk when it comes to values. For us, innovation means authentic, impactful communications that inspire change.

The accolade from the Stationers' Company meant a great deal to our team. The ceremony itself,

complete with an insightful address from Vint Cerf and the excitement of a live on-stage interview, was a reminder of the breadth of innovation happening across the UK's communications and content industries.

We were so impressed that we joined the Stationers' Company as an SME member. Membership has already proven hugely valuable, from attending events such as the London Press Club panel debate on AI and the future of journalism to connecting with peers across publishing, media and technology at networking functions across the year. We were especially proud to be awarded the Stationers' 2025 Warrant for our social purpose communications, a recognition of our continuing commitment to impact and excellence.

For us, innovation is not an add-on. It's the way we work. Whether we're helping charities campaign on environmental issues, heritage organisations reach new audiences or businesses embed sustainability into their communications, we are driven by the belief that communications can and should be a force for good.

As members of the Stationers' Company, we look forward to continually learning, sharing and collaborating, and keeping purposeful innovation at the heart of everything we do.



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# Thank you

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**This year, our second in the Co-Chair seat, we asked our judges to evaluate possibly the highest calibre of entries we've seen at these awards and somehow pick winners from among them.**

What stood out most vividly from the process was the human connection that remains central to the most impactful innovations. Some solutions look to the methods and materials of the past, others embrace the technologies of the future, but all are centred on understanding people and attempting to make their lives easier. Our Innovator of the Year, FabLittleBag, is a shining example of this.

Our thanks to Pearson and Picon for their huge and ongoing support as our main sponsors, and to Hobbs Printers for generously gifting us the print, delivered to their famously high standards. Thanks too to Endecom and their MD, Liveryman Neil Barrett, for supporting our start ups category and offering the winner a prize that will make a genuine difference to the next stage of their development.

We are indebted, as always, to the knowledge and commitment of our judging panel. Our special thanks to Past Master Helen Esmonde, who has served as a judge

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for several years and is handing over the mantle for 2026. Her expertise and lightness of touch in the judging process have been deeply appreciated.

Thank you to our special guest, Dr Vanessa Lawrence CB, as inspiring a presence at these awards as we could ever hope to have.

It takes a team to make a project like this happen and the expert support of Katie Dare has been absolutely essential to the co-ordination of the awards. Court Member Jill Jones has provided invaluable guidance and commitment. Thanks too to Giles Fagan, the Clerk, and the whole team at Stationers' Hall, especially Karyn Keating for her communications guidance and support across social media.

Our thanks to Mark Riddaway for creating this brochure, and Georgina Brown for interviewing the award winners. And finally, let us raise a glass to Castelnau for laying on the fabulous champagne reception.

**Vida Barr-Jones  
& Kate Howell**  
Co-Chairs,  
Innovation Excellence Awards 2025

# INFLUENCERS **LDN**

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